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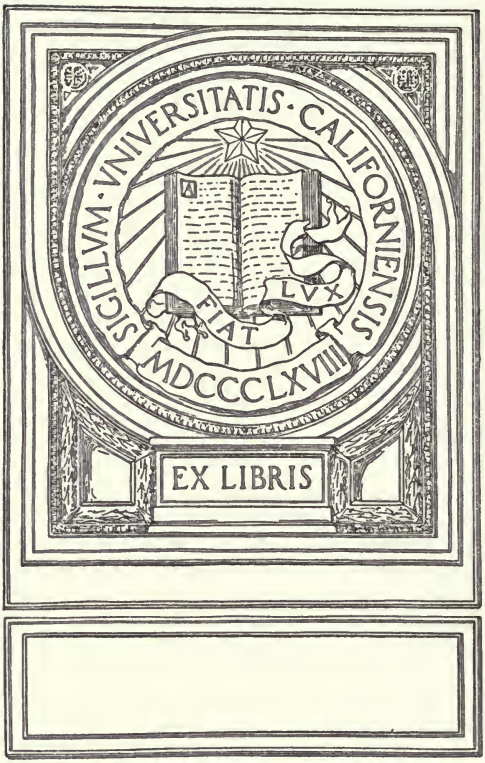

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Dr. *Colman's*

SERMON

ON THE

Unspeakable Gift.

February 1. 1739.

THE

Unſpeakable Gift of GOD;

A right

Charitable and Bountiful Spirit

TO THE

Poor and Needy Members

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

A

SERMON

Preached at the publick *Lecture* in *Boſton*, *February* 1. 1739.

By *Benjamin Colman*, D. D.

Prov. xxii. 9. *He that hath a bountiful Eye ſhall be bleſſed, for he giveth of his Bread to the Poor.*
Rom. v. 17. *They which receive Abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in Life by Jeſus Chriſt.*

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THE

Unſpeakable Gift.

II. CORINTHIANS, ix. 15.

Thanks be to GOD *for his unſpeakable Gift.*

THANKS is the *leaſt* that can be render'd for any *Gift*; and *unſpeakable* Thanks the leaſt for a Gift that is unſpeakable. Let us conſider the particular *Gift* here ſpoken of, and the *Honour* here done it, the *Glory* put upon it.

Some would have it to mean CHRIST Himſelf, who is indeed the *greateſt Gift* of God to fallen Man, ineffable, inconceivable. John iv. 10. *If thou kneweſt the Gift of God!* Eph. iii. 8. *What is the Height and Depth, and Length and Breadth of the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge.*

Some ſay *Grace*, the *regenerating* Grace of God; or (which is the ſame) the HOLY SPIRIT of God in all his *ſaving* Gifts, Graces and Comforts: And indeed all the *Fruits*

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Fruits of the Spirit (a) are unſpeakable Gifts, " *Love, Peace, Joy, Longſuffering, Goodneſs, Meekneſs,* &c. My *Context* (b) ſpeaks of this Gift, " *God is able to make* ALL GRACE *to abound to you, that ye always having an Alſufficiency in all things, may abound to every good Work.*

But after all, The *Grace* and the *Gift by Grace* here ſpoken of, is neither more nor leſs than the particular Grace of *Charity* and *Liberality* to the Poor and Needy; an enlarged Heart and open Hand to relieve and ſupply them in their Wants and Neceſſities. ---- The whole *Chapter* is on this ſingle *Subject* and Argument, touching *Miniſtring to the Saints*, v. 1. *as a Maſter of Bounty*, v. 5. *ſowing bountifully*, v. 7. *giving to the Poor*, v. 9. *ſupplying the Wants of Saints*, v. 12. *liberal Diſtribution to all Men*: This is the *exceeding Grace* and *unſpeakable Gift*, for which *Thanks* is here given to God.

And great is the *Honour and Glory* done it, in the *Epithet* UNSPEAKABLE, and in the THANKSGIVING to God for it.

" *Who can by ſearching find out* GOD, or any *Gift* of His, *unto Perfection?* Who can *ſhew forth all his Praiſe?* All is comprehended in the one Word LOVE. Yet my *Text* means not to dignify a Spirit of *Liberality* above the *other* Exerciſes of Grace, ſave only as the *Greateſt* of all is *Charity* (c), which is but perfected at Death and *abides* for ever, when *Faith* and *Hope* are ſwallow'd up in Viſion. Nevertheleſs it muſt be added, that *Love* in this particular *Mode* and Miniſtration, of which my *Text* ſpeaks, will *ſoon fail*; for there are no Objects of *Charity* in *Heaven*, none *poor* or *needy* there: However, *Benevolence*, the Soul and *Eſſence* of Charity, *reigns* there in Glory for ever and ever.

Bleſſed be GOD that we have *ſomething* and ſo *much* of it on *Earth*, in our *Way* to Heaven: " *Thanks* to *Him* for it, ſays my *Text.* The Glory is *God's*, for it is

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(a) *Gal.* v. 22. (b) Ver. 8. (c) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13.

his

his Gift, & this is the Glory of the Gift that it is *his*; this makes it the *unspeakable* thing it is: Divine, Heavenly, Infinite, in its Origine, Influence and endless Effects.

GOD is the free and bountiful *Author* of this Grace in any, He *gives* it to Those that have it; the Ability and the Heart to do kind and liberal Things is from *Him*; He puts it into the Heart, and he enlarges it. "Even Power to *eat* our Bread is from Him, how much more to *give* of it to *others*, to *seven* and also to *eight* (d).

The *liberal Man* is God's Gift to the World; to the *Place* where he lives, to *distant* Places also, if he have a Hand full and *strong* eno' to scatter far and near. Some in the Churches of *Macedonia* were thus made to *differ* and excel: God ministred *seed* to them and they sowed plentifully; God *enriched* them unto all Bountifulness, and the *Thanksgiving* was abundant to God.

The *Praise* is not to the charitable Person, who *devises* the liberal Things, but to *God* who gives him the Heart. The good Man will be *far* from taking any of the Praise to himself, but to *God's Name* he gives the Glory. "*It is not in me*, said the Princely *Joseph*, when *Pharaoh* asked him of the *unspeakable Gift* he heard was in him; "*God shall give Pharaoh an Answer of Peace* (e): He honour'd himself the more in the Sight of *Pharaoh* and his *Princes* by assuming nothing to himself; "*Can we find such a Man as this* (said the *King*) *in whom the Spirit of God is? for as much as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as Thou art.*

We must have a great Care not to *idolise* those whom God pleases to honour, by sacrificing to them instead of God, who alone is to be worship'd. Yet the *Man* who is God's Hand, and his *Gift*, comes in for a civil Honour and Respect, a grateful Acknowledgment of his own Goodwill in shewing the *Kindnesses of God:* Of which our *Context* is full, "For to their *Power* and beyond

(d) *Eccle.* iii. 13. xi. 2. (e) *Gen.* xli. 38.

they

" they were *willing of themſelves*, praying us to receive " the *Gift* and take on us the *Fellowſhip* ; " Where- " fore ſhew *before the Churches* the Proof of your Love, " and of our *boaſting* on your behalf ; for I know the " *Forwardneſs* of your Mind, and your Zeal has provo- " ked many : " As it is written, He has diſpers'd abroad, " he has given to the Poor, his *Righteouſneſs* endureth " for ever, his *Horn* ſhall be exalted with Honour (f) " While by the *Experiment* of this Miniſtration they " *glorify God* for your profeſſed *Subjection* to the Goſ- " pel ; *longing after you for the exceeding Grace of God* " *in you.*

Having thus ſet my *Text* in its true and beſt Light, I ſhall endeavour to ſpeak to this *Doctrine* from it,

" That a right charitable and *liberal* Frame of Spirit to the *poor* and needy is an *unſpeakable Gift of God* ; for which great *Thankfulneſs* is due to his *glorious Name*, and abundant *Thankſgiving* ſhould be fervently render'd in the *Churches of the Saints.*"

I am therefore to ſhew,

1. What we are to underſtand by a *right charitable* and liberal Spirit ?

2. That it is an *unſpeakable Gift* of God.

3. The abundant *Thankſgivings* to be render'd for it in the *Churches of Chriſt.*

I. By a right *charitable* and liberal Spirit, I underſtand a Mind and Heart *prone and large*, free and ready in Proportion to our *Ability* and the *Occaſions* occurring to us, to pity and *relieve* the Wants of the *Poor*, more eſpecially of the virtuous and *religious* Poor.

It is the *religious* Exerciſe of the *Grace* of Charity, which we are to *preach* to you from the *Goſpel* of Chriſt ;

(f) *Pſalm* cxii. 9. and

and my *Context* confines me to *this* Consideration of it, " as the *Grace of God bestowed on the Churches*, and the *Fellowship of ministring to the Saints.* So that a *Principle* of *Grace* in the Heart, and the *Exercise* of it in the Life, are here supposed; That is to say, a giving to the poor and needy from *Faith in Christ* and his *Word*, from *Love* to Him and his *People*, upon the *Commandment* and *Promises* of the Gospel; in *Obedience* to the one, and *Hope* in the other.

It is not therefore meerly a *humane*, tender, generous *natural Temper*, or *acquired* Disposition towards a necessitous or compassionable Object; and yet *this* is a distinguishing *Gift* of Providence to some more than others; which renders 'em more *lovely* and of a superior Spirit; but we must suppose a Soul of this Disposition *sanctified*, and acting upon religious *Principles and Motives*; of one of *another* Disposition *changed* by the Power of Divine Grace into *this*; and then what rais'd and *enobled* Souls do the one and other become? *all their Things being done with Charity!* from a reigning Love to God and Goodness as such, as there is Opportunity unto *all Men*, but especially unto the *Houshold of Faith*, proving their Love before the *Churches.*

In this Case a special Exercise of proper Evangelical *Faith* with *Love* is supposed, as in the *Frame* of Spirit, so in the chosen *Objects*, poor *Saints* and Members of *Jesus Christ*, for *His* sake, and as unto *Him*, and as He will accept and reward another Day; " *Ye did it unto Me.* This is *Christ form'd in us*, his Spirit ruling in us, a *new Nature* given to us, acting in new Manner, on new Principles, Ends and Motives; such as the meer *natural* Man perceives not, in equal or greater Benefactions; a *Sacrifice holy and acceptable to God.*

It is *easy* to the *Power* of God and *worthy* of his *Mercy*, so to change the Heart of the naturally *Niggard* & grudging, into this *Riches* of Benignity and Beneficence, whereof there seem to have been *many Instances* in the *first Days* of the Gospel, upon the *pouring* out of the *Spirit*; when the *Multitude* of them that believed were

of *one* Heart and Soul; neither ſaid *any* of them, that ought of the things they poſſeſſed were their *own*, but they had all things *common*, Acts iv. *ult.* An *extraordinary* Spirit of *Love*, at an extraordinary Time and Occaſion! a wonderful Effuſion of the HOLY GHOST, from the late crucified and aſcended JESUS. The like therefore has not been known in *ordinary* Times, nor is it the *ſtanding* Exerciſe of the *Spirit* in the ſanctified. But the *Want* of what ſhould be *common* among Chriſtians at *all* Times, is a ſad and *dark* Teſtimony of the *Poverty* of Grace; for there certainly are among us People of *high Profeſſion*, who have *no* Heart to do almoſt any thing at all, in a way of *Diſtribution* to the Poor, or for pious Uſes; no not a known Inſtance for Years together; while God is liberally giving to them, and they can lay up and lay out and make Purchaſes! but if you ſpeak of *giving*, they *hide themſelves from their own Fleſh*, even tho' they be eſteemed *Members of Chriſt* alſo.

Let us always ſee to it, that our *Principle and End* be right before God, genuine and truly *Chriſtian*; that neither *Vanity*, Affectation or Oſtentation, nor yet meer *Humanity* and good Nature, be *paſs'd on God* for gracious *Charity*, on Whom it cannot; nor yet on *Men*, nor on *our ſelves*, which alſo is next to impoſſible under our Illuminations by the Goſpel. Wherefore our *Lord*, according to the infinite Wiſdom and Sanctity of God in Him, has warned us to *take heed how we do our Alms*, leſt we have no Reward from *our Father in Heaven*, Matth. vi.

II. I am now to ſhow, that this Evangelical Chriſtian *charitable Frame* of Spirit is an *unſpeakable Gift of God.*

And here,

1. Literally true it is, that *no Tongue* of Man can duely ſpeak of it, or enough praiſe and *celebrate* it. It is above all our Thoughts and Words, we can neither think or ſpeak of it as it merits. Such is every *Work* and Gift of God in the Kingdom of *Nature* and *Providence.*

" See

" See that thou *magnify* theſe viſible Works, which *Eyes of Fleſh* behold. " *His Work is honourable and glorious, and his Praiſe endureth for Ever.* How much more his *Spiritual Work*, the *Gift by Grace* within thy Self and Others. The *Angels* of God *pry* ſilently into *this*, and we need *their* Eyes and Tongues to look into it and ſpeak of it. " Bleſs the Lord ye his *Angels* that excel in Strength ! and " *awake up our Glory* too, though we be but *Babes and Sucklings* in compariſon of Them; for from *our* Mind and Mouth God has *ordained* Strength.----We *liſp* and ſtammer at a proper Word, and poorly apprehend many of the Great Words put into our Mouth. " Let Him *teach* us what we ſhall ſay ! and ſhall it be *told* Him that we ſpeak ! who can *utter* his mighty Acts, or ſhew forth all his Praiſe ! ----Accordingly the Apoſtle *labours* in my *Context*, to ſpeak of the *Gift* of God ; ſeems at a *loſs*, ſpeaks abundantly, over and over, and knows not when he has ſaid enough of the excellent Grace : " *Inriched*, ſays he, *in every* " *thing*, to all *Bountifulneſs*, which is *abundant* by many " Thankſgivings to God, from thoſe that *long* after " you for the *exceeding* Grace of God in you."---- If a Man wou'd ſpeak of a thing *unſpeakable*, it muſt be juſt after *this manner* ; it being literally true, that *no Tongue* of Man can fully ſpeak the Praiſes of Chriſtian *Charity.*

2. *Unſpeakable* is the *Good done* in the World by a right *charitable* Frame of Spirit. Unſpeakable are the *Needs* which Sin has brought upon us, not only on the *poor and low* of the World, but alſo on *others*, even on the richeſt and higheſt. We unſpeakably need one anothers *Help* and Service, and unſpeakable are the *Benefits* we receive from others in our Neceſſities. The *poor* ſerve the *rich* abundantly, more eſpecially in their *Sickneſſes* ; and very often do it *gratis*, for nothing, out of pure Humanity, Reſpect and Compaſſion, and are never requited : Sometimes from *Gratitude* for Favours received, and as often (I would wiſh) from a Principle of *Grace* within them, it being all the Way they have to expreſs a *pious Love* to God & their Neighbours.--Others to whom God has given Riches, and *Largeneſs* of Heart

to do Good with it, give *Portions* to the Poor by ſevens and eights, and by ſcores and hundreds ; *deviſing* liberal things, and caſting their *Bread* upon the Waters. " The *Bowels* of the poor are refreſhed by them, they " are Eyes to the *blind* and Feet to the *lame*, Parents to " the *Fatherleſs*, and they cauſe the *Widow*'s Heart to " ſing ; the Bleſſing of them that are ready to *periſh* " comes on them, and of him that is *helpleſs*. They are as the Heat and Rain to a thirſty and cold Earth, as the *Light* of the Morning and the *Dews* of the Evening to thoſe among whom they dwell, who paſs their *Days and Nights* the better for their Neighbourhood. " Their Glory is *freſh* in them, and their *Bow* is re- " newed in their Hand." They live not to *Themſelves*, but others *glean* by handfuls of what they plentifully ſowe. God *multiply* their Seed ſown, and *increaſe* the Fruits of their Righteouſneſs ; while the *Loyns* of the Poor bleſs them, warm'd with the *Fleece* of their Flock. Theſe are the Men of whom we ſhall *hear well* another Day, but how will they be able to *bear the Joy* of the bleſſed Words ! " *I was hungry and ye gave me Meat*, " *thirſty and ye gave me Drink*, *naked and ye clothed me*, " *a Stranger and ye took me in*". Unſpeakable (you ſee) is the *Good done* in this needy World, and *Heaven* acknowleges it to be ſo, and accordingly *rates the Gift* in the Book of Account.

3. Unſpeakable is *the Glory redounding to* GOD from a right Chriſtian *charitable* Frame of Spirit, in the noble humble Exerciſe of it thro' the Earth, and therefore is it an *unſpeakable Gift*. This is a *Reaſon* or Argument that riſes much higher than the former ; for if it be a good and great Thing to do much Good to our Fellow-Creatures, how much more is it to be any Ways Inſtrumental in any *Glory and Honour* to the Name of GOD ? Yet HE *is glorified* (ſays my Context) by *Others*, on the Account of the Acts of *Bounty* done them by their merciful Neighbour.

The Great and bountiful *God* makes *much*, makes the *moſt* of our *little Alms* and Offerings to Him : As our *Saviour* did of the *Widow's two Mites* ; they were

a *rich* Offering in his Eye, and he *magnify'd* it and her. So God *ſhines on his own Works* wrought in us and by us, and puts great *Honour* on 'em, makes great *Account* of 'em. And ſo in the laſt Day he will glorify *Himſelf* in glorifying his *Elect*, " *In as much as ye have done it* " *to the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto* " *me.*

We are bid to " let our Lights *ſhine before Men*, " that they *ſeeing* our good Works may *glorify our Fa-* " *ther* which is in Heaven. The *liberal Man* does ſo, but *not* to be ſeen of Men. There is that is *manifeſt*, and cannot be *hid*. Men do not light a *Candle* and put it under a *Buſhel*. A good Man bleſſes God for the Light that ſhines on *others*, as well as on Himſelf. If *one* is inriched to all Bountifulneſs, it cauſes in *others* Thankſgiving to God; yea is abundant by *many* Thankſgivings to Him, ſays my *Context*: " They *glorify* God for your profeſſed Subjection to the Goſpel, and *pray* unto God for you.

Now the *leaſt Glory* to God is an *unſpeakable* thing. What is *Man*, and what the *World* he lives in, and what the *Riches* thereof, and you will ſay what the *poor* of it, that GOD ſhould have *Glory* from them! " *Behold He putteth no Truſt in his Saints, and the Heavens are not clean in his Sight! how much leſs Man that is a Worm!* What then can *Man* think or ſpeak of, ask or *pray* for, like to *this! Father in Heaven, thy Name be hallowed!--- for Thine is the Kingdom and Power and Glory for ever!* Well is it made the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *firſt* and the *laſt*, in our Prayers. It muſt be the *everlaſting Law and Motive* to us, reſpecting giving and receiving; 1 Peter iv. 11. *If any Man miniſter, of the Ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Praiſe and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

4. The *Good to our ſelves* is unſpeakable, in a *liberal* and bountiful Spirit, and therefore it is an *unſpeakable Gift* to us and in us. Unſpeakable is the *preſent Comfort* to

to a good Man by this *Gift*, and unſpeakable is the *future and eternal Reward* of it in the Life to come.

1. If we conſider only the *Pleaſure* and Comfort of it to a Man in *this Life*, to be of a merciful and *bountiful Eye*, it is to him an unſpeakable Gift. He is *ſatisfied in Himſelf*, God anſwers him in *the Joy of his Heart*. The greateſt Pleaſure of Life is to *be* good and *do* good. The Words of our *Lord Jeſus* are to be had in everlaſting Remembrance, "*It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* The Man's *State* and *Frame* is more bleſſed; unleſs it be when the *poor* Man exceeds in *Grace*, in the *manner* of his receiving; and then the *Tide* turns on his Side.

Job tells us the *Pleaſure* he found in Acts of *Munificence* in the Days of his Proſperity; and it was unſpeakable: "When the *Ear* heard me, it *bleſſed* me! when "the *Eye* ſaw me it gave *witneſs* to me! then ſaid I, "I ſhall *die in my Neſt*, or *multiply my Days* as the Sand! "my *Root* was *ſpread out* by the Waters, and the *Dew* "lay all Night upon my *Branch*! my *Glory* was freſh "in me, and my *Bow* was renewed in my Hand! they "waited for me as for the *Rain*, and opened their "Mouth *wide* as for the latter Rain! I choſe out their "Way and ſat *Chief*, and dwelt as a *King* in his Army; "as *One* that comforteth the Mourners."

Even all the *bitter Sorrows of Job* could not take away the Comfort of the Remembrance of his *paſt Joys* in Acts of *Charity* & Mercy. "*If* (ſaid he) *I had with-held the poor from his Deſire*,"--- O the *Pleaſure* of yeilding them *their Deſire*, when it is *pious* and juſt, and the *Power* be in our Hand, and our *Heart* be big enough;----or "if I *cauſed* "*the Eyes of the Widow to fail!* If *I eat my Morſel* "*alone*, and the *Fatherleſs* did not ſhare with me! for "from my *Youth* I was his *Father*, and Widow's *Guide*." ---I tell you, that as the *Heart* knows its own *Bitterneſs*, ſo only the Heart of a *Job* knows the *Comfort* of a Conſciouſneſs of ſuch a *Frame* and Exerciſe, as this which his own Words have ſpoken, and who can add to them? How did all the *Good* he had ever done to the Poor *return* into his own *Boſom*, and *flow out* of his *Lips* from the

the *Abundance* in his *Heart !* The *Objects of Charity* were always to him *as his own Bowels*, and how were his *Bowels refresh'd* hereby, at the Time and long after. He *felt* the ruling Power of Grace, and had *Confidence* toward God. The *Joy of Faith and Hope* accompanied and follow'd the Exercise of *Love* and *brotherly Kindness*.

2. But the Great and last, the *infinite and eternal Rewards* of Grace, to the *charitable* and godly Man, are in the Blessedness and Glories of *the World to come*, and these render the *Gift* of Grace to him and in him *unspeakable*. " *Eye* has not seen this, nor *Ear* heard it, " nor can it enter into our *Hearts* to conceive of it. " When *the Son of Man* shall come in *his Glory*, and " *fashion* his *Elect* and Merciful Ones after *his own glori-* " *ous Body*, and say to 'em in the Hearing of all his *holy* " *Angels*,---" Come ye *blessed* of my Father, inherit the " *Kingdom* prepared for you from the Foundation of the " World ! *for I was hungry and ye gave me Meat*, &c. --- O with what *Rapture* will they make the *humble Answer*, " Lord, *when* saw we thee *hungry* and *fed* thee, or *thirsty* and gave thee *Drink ?*---The *Day* must reveal it, what the *Joy* of the *Lord* and of his *Members* will then be ! then they shall be *recompenc'd*, at the *Resurrection* of the Just. It is worth *waiting* for the *Joys* of that blessed Day, which will be given in *full* Measure, *pressed down and running over*. " Then he that has sown *boun-* " *tifully* shall reap bountifully : Then not a *Cup of* " *Water* given as to a *Disciple* of Christ shall be for- " gotten. The Rewards of free Grace will be found " nothing less than a *Crown* and *Kingdom*, a Crown of *Glory eternal* in the Heavens. How unknown, *unspeakable*, unsearchable is this ! it is *high as Heaven*, what can'st thou *know ?* Infinite as GOD *Himself*, who is *thy* SHIELD and *exceeding great Reward* ; O *Seed* of generous *Abraham !* It is *a far exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*.---We find and *see* many *temporal* things unsearchable, how much more those that are *unseen and eternal*. Wherefore,

III. The

III. The *higheſt Thankſgivings* are due from us to the *bleſſed God*, for this *his unſpeakable Gift* to any of the Children of Men; and ſhould be *fervently render'd* to Him in the *Churches* of his Saints. "*Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable Gift.*

But (as was ſaid before) *what* Thanks can *we* render, when the Gift is *unſpeakable?* O 'tis *above* all our Praiſes and Bleſſings! Yet as the *Levites* ſaid to the Auguſt Congregation, Nehem ix. 5. "*Stand up and bleſs the Lord your God for ever and ever! and bleſſed be thy glorious Name which is exalted above all Praiſe.*

I ſhall only ſay *two* Things here,

1. They that *receive* the Gift ſhould be very *thankful* to God for it. The charitable Perſon ſhould himſelf give *Thanks* to God for making him ſo, while yet he *abaſes* himſelf before the Lord, as an unprofitable Creature, and behaves humble and lowly before *Men.* Yet ought he to glorify God for any *Heart* to do good, and for any *Means* to do it. He muſt aſſume nothing to *himſelf*, but aſcribe all to *God*; of Whom and *to Whom* are all things. "For what haſt *thou* which is not received? and if received, whereof haſt thou to *glory?* The Glory belongs to Him who has given to *thee*, that *thou* may'ſt give to others. As, ſuppoſe a rich and charitable Perſon puts into my Hand a *Sum* or Sums of Money to diſtribute unto others in Want; it is *his* Gift and Bounty, and not mine; and *I* ought to be thankful to Him together with thoſe to whom I diſtribute. In like manner if GOD give *You* Ability and a Heart to do good to others, you owe the *firſt* Thanks to God, and ſhou'd be ready to ſay with the *Church*, "*Not unto us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy Name be Glory.*

You, my *Brethren!* that are honoured of God to *give* unto the poor, might have been your ſelves, and ſo your Families, among the *indigent* and neceſſitous! You might have been *Receivers* of the Charities of others, the Objects of their Compaſſion.

Or

Or yet *worſe*, You might have been among the niggardly and *covetous* in the midſt of Riches; not able to *eat* of your own Bread, and leſs to give unto others! An *Evil* too often ſeen and felt, a Miſery too common under the *Sun*, which yet ſhines liberally on the niggard Soul.

Or ſtill worſe, You might have been among the *fraudulent and unjuſt*, the Cheat, the Theif and the Robber; or (which is little better) the Gripe and the Extortioner, the Spoiler of the Widow, the motherleſs and fatherleſs! But who has made you to *differ?* made Thee a *Benefactor* and Bleſſing to the World, among theſe Plagues and Curſes in it? GOD, who is rich in Mercy, and *Sovereign* in his Gifts and Grace to Men, *He* has done it! "Who has Mercy becauſe he *will* have Mercy. He that made *Abel Cain's* Brother, and gave to *Abraham* and *Job* and *Moſes* their *Grandeur* of Heart.

Let *free Grace* therefore have all the Glory; as the Apoſtle teaches us, Epheſ. 3. 18. *To me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints is this Grace given.* So *thou* "by "the *Grace* of God art what thou art, and his Grace "given thee has not been *in vain!* And if you *labour* "more than others, yet not *you*, but the Grace of God "in You.---So when *David* had done a *kingly* part, and his *Princes* a very *princely* one, in way of Offerings out of their Eſtates; then *David* ſaid before the Lord, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. "*But who am I O Lord God,* "*and what is my People, that we ſhould be able to offer* "*ſo willingly after this ſort! for all things come of Thee* "*and of thy own have we given thee.*--- Thus they that *receive the Gift*, ſhould give *Thanks* for it.

2. *Others*, but eſpecially the *poor and needy*, they ſhould be very *thankful* to God. The *Charitable* are *God's Gifts to Men*, even to the *rebellious*; (and indeed *ſuch* themſelves among their *Brethren*) *that the Lord God might dwell among us.* I may lawfully *transfer* theſe Words from *Miniſters* in the Church, to the *liberal* in the Flocks; for it is the ſame *God* and the ſame *Grace* that forms both the one and the other, to ſerve the

Needs of Souls and Bodies. "We *do you to wit* therefore of the *Grace of God* beſtowed on the *Churches*, in both. The ſame *Holy Spirit* that deſcended on the *Apoſtles* in Tongues of Fire, came down on the *Multitude of Believers* at that memorable Time, and they had *all things common*. And now the *ordinary* Gifts of your *Miniſters* for the Service of your Souls, and the ordinary Spirit of *Charity* in our Churches, are from the ſame Fulneſs, of *Chriſt*; of Whom all do receive and Grace upon Grace. He puts the *earneſt Care* for Soul and Body into the one and other; whether it be *Titus* or *Gaius*, doing faithfully for the *Brethren* or *Strangers*.

The Gifts and Graces of *others*, and the *Uſe* God pleaſes to make of them, ſhould be *pleaſant* to us and *admired* by us; and we ſhould rejoice in all that we ſee of God in them. We ſhould prize the good *Examples* they give us, give God the *Glory* of them, and be excited to a holy Imitation. 1. Theſſ. iii. 9. *For what Thanks can we render unto God for you? for all the Joy wherewith we joy before our God for your ſakes.*

The *poor* eſpecially ſhould be very *thankful to God*, for his unſpeakable Gift to *them*, in all the *Charities* of the rich and bountiful. They ſhould religiouſly accept the Gift of Heaven in *thoſe* whom they muſt call their *Benefactors*. They ſhould look thro' and above *Men* unto God, who gives by their Hands. They muſt no more *idolize* Men, than they would bow down to an *Image* of Wood or Gold; no more than they would *kiſs the Calves*, or their *Hand* to the *Sun* or *Moon* in their Brightneſs; for this were to deny the *moſt high* and firſt Benefactor. "*Why look ye ſo earneſtly at us?* ſaid *Peter* and *John* to the wondring and almoſt worſhipping People at the Gate of the Temple, when they had in the Name of *Jeſus* given *more* than Silver or Gold to the *Cripple*, even *Feet* to walk and leap. What is a bountiful *Donor* to us, but a *Steward* and *Almoner* of God, his kind and open Hand! Who ſhall have the *Praiſe?* the *King* that orders his *Medals* to be ſtrowed among the Crowd, or the *Servitor* that ſcatters 'em at his Command? *Jacob* ſaw the Face of God in *Eſau's* Affection, when

when he *ran* with open Arms and Eyes full of Tears to embrace him. So let the *poor* ſee the Face and Hand of *God*, in all the Heart and Care of *others* for them. They are what God makes 'em, and he has made 'em *ſuch* for you.

God knows the irreligious *poor*, ungrateful to Him, *unthankful and unholy*, who receive and eat and give him not Thanks. It may be they *bow* to Men, and *treble* their Thanks to them and *bleſs* 'em, and yet do *not* lift their Hearts at all to God. It may be they neither *pray* for themſelves or others in ſecret, altho' their *Dependance* is ſo great on Providence and its Inſtruments; nor do they *bleſs God* when he ſends 'em in Supplies --- God *values* the Thanks of the *Poor* as much as of the Rich, and they as much *owe* it to Him. Let 'em learn the Song of *Hannah*, and ſing it with her gracious Spirit, 1 Sam. 2. *init* " *My Heart rejoices in the Lord, my Horn is exalted in the Lord : He maketh poor and maketh rich ; the hungry ceaſe, and the rich have hired out themſelves for Bread.*

Having thus at large conſider'd the *unſpeakable Gift* of God, in a right *charitable* Frame of Spirit, and the *Thankſgiving* and Praiſe due from us unto God therefor, I might naturally go into a large *Compaſs* of Meditation on *other* the unſpeakable Gifts of God to us, all of which are more or leſs related unto *this* that I have been ſpeaking of; and it may be I could not well go into a more proper and profitable *Application of the Subject.*

As,

1. Look we *within our ſelves*, into our own *Souls* and Bodies, fram'd as they are for *Thankſgiving* to God, and for all *Offices of Humanity and Charity* to our Nei'bours; what a *Gift of God* is this *Mind* and *Heart*, and theſe *Eyes* and *Hands*; firſt to lift up to *God*, and then to look and reach out to *his poor* ! this *ſocial Nature* for worſhipping and communicating ! In every *Relation* and in all *Offices* of Human Life, *publick* and *private*, wherein God has plac'd us to *ſerve* and *bleſs* one another; what Gifts of God *unſpeakable* ought every One to be unto

his *Correlate* and therein to the *Community!* from the Conſort, Parent and Child, up to the *King* on the Throne; and down again from all that *rule* under Him, to the *loweſt* Subject in the State!----What a *wide Compaſs* of unſpeakable Bleſſings wou'd every Perſon, in every Order, preſent us with? all under the *Law of Kindneſs*, and all their *Things done with Charity.*

2. What an *unſpeakable* Gift therefore is a good *Government*, good Magiſtrates, wiſe, pious, faithful, public-ſpirited Rulers; great and good *Kings*, *Princes*, *Nobles*, *Governours*, *Legiſlators*, and *Judges*: Whom we are bid to *pray* for, and are bound to give *Thanks* for; while under them we are living *quiet and peaceable Lives*, *in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1,---4. *He ſhall be as the Light of the Morning when the Sun ariſeth, even a Morning without Clouds; and as the tender Graſs ſpringing out of the Earth by clear ſhining after Rain.* Such *Gifts* from Heaven were *Moſes* and *Joſhua*, *Samuel* and *David*, *Hezekiah* and *Nehemiah* to the *Iſrael* of God, in their Generation.

3. What an *unſpeakable Gift* of God to us is our *Church-State*, our *ſpiritual* Relation in Chriſt, our *Fellowſhip* in the Goſpel, our *Brotherhood*, the *Vocation* wherewith we are called! to be a *ſpiritual Houſe*, a *Kingdom of Prieſts*, a *choſen Generation*, a *peculiar People and Treaſure*, to ſhew forth the *Praiſes* of our God and Saviour. Your *Sabbaths*, the preached *Goſpel*, the *Ordinances* of our God, and the *Miniſters* of Religion; theſe are among the *Gifts* from the *Aſcended Jeſus*. As it is written, ---"I gave them my *Sabbaths* for a *Sign* "between Me and them that I am the Lord that doth "*ſanctify* them (g): He gave his *Word* unto *Jacob*, "his *Statutes* and Judgments unto *Iſrael*, He has not "done ſo by many a People: He gave *Prophets*, *Apo-*"*ſtles*, *Evangeliſts*, *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, for the per-"fecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry,

(g) *Ezek.* xx. 12. *Pſal.* cxlvii. 19. *Eph.* iv. 8, 11. 2 *Cor.* iv. 7.

"for

" for the Edifying the Body of Christ. *Enoch*, *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Elijah* and *Elisha*, *Peter* and *John* and *Paul*, and many after them, in their Spirit, have been invaluable Gifts to the Church ; a *Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, that the *Excellency of the Power* may be of God and not of Man. Nor have there been wanting in the Churches of Christ, nor ever shall be, such *Gifts* from among their gracious *Members*, to and of whom we may take up the *illustrious Words* of the *Apostle* to the *Philippians* and the *Thessalonians*, in our Thanksgivings to God (h): " I *thank* " my God upon every Remembrance of you, for your " *Fellowship* in the Gospel ! and we give Thanks always " *for you all*, remembring without ceasing your *Work of* " *Faith*, and *Labour of Love*, and *Patience of Hope in* " *our Lord Jesus Christ* ; and ye became followers of us " and of the *Lord*, having received the *Word* with much " Affliction and Joy in the *Holy Ghost* ; because your " *Faith* groweth exceedingly, and your *Charity* one to " another aboundeth ; so that we *glory* in You in the " Churches of God for your *Patience and Faith*. Thus the *meanest and poorest*, on worldly Accounts, in the *visible* Church, became *unspeakable Gifts* of Grace to it ; and will be found so in the Church of the *First-born*, whose *Names* are written in Heaven.

But to *leave* all things here *below*, and to *ascend up far above all Heavens*, I add

4. and lastly, The unspeakable Gift of CHRIST and of the HOLY SPIRIT, the *Saviour* and *Sanctifier* of Souls ; which *two are one*, equal in *Godhead and Glory*. Here *triumph* with me, my *Hearers*, in the *adoring* Contemplation of the *ineffable* Gift of God, his own *Eternal Son*, the *Only-begotten of the Father*, whose *Glory* was beheld in his *Miracles of Mercy* to the *Bodies* of Men, but more in his Compassions to their *Souls* ; his holy *Ministry*, *Labours* and *Sufferings* for their Salvation ; to save our Souls from *spiritual and eternal Death*, to cover a multitude of *Sins*, to make *Reconciliation* for

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(h) *Phil.* i. 3, 1 *Thes.* i. 3. 2. i. 3.

Iniquity,

Iniquity, to bring in an Everlaſting *Righteouſneſs* for the Juſtification of Sinners. The *crucified Jeſus* is ſuch a a Gift of God to the Sons of Men, as infinitely tranſcends the Tongues of *Angels*, when they would give Him the Glory of it. They *deſire to look into it*, and give *Glory in the Higheſt*. The *Elders* with them prepare *new Songs* for ever, and *caſt their Crowns before the Throne.*

How then ſhall the Tongues of *Men* below be able to ſpeak of the *Gift* of God to us in the *Incarnation*, *Obedience*, *Death*, *Reſurrection* and *Interceſſion* of CHRIST, or of his *Coming again* in Glory for the Salvation of thoſe that believe in Him !--- Here all Words are *ſwallowed up*, we are ſtruck mute, & Praiſe ſits ſilent. Iſai. ix. 6. *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder: And his Name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace !*

This, *this* (my *Brethren*) is the *unſpeakable Gift* of God unto us, to be in in *Everlaſting Remembrance* with us in all our *Worſhip* before Him, ſecret, private and public ; every Lord's-Day and all our Communion-Days: In every *Ordinance* of Worſhip He is *offer'd* to us for our thankful *Acceptance*, to be of God made unto us *Wiſdom*, *Righteouſneſs*, *Sanctification* and *Redemption !* and *we* muſt be making the Offering of *our Selves* to Him, as *bought with a Price*, *living Sacrifices*, *which is our reaſonable Service*, *holy and acceptable to God. Grace* to do this, is an *unſpeakable Gift* indeed.

Therefore we muſt give equal Glory to the HOLY GHOST, yielding our Selves to *Him*, as the bleſſed *Sanctifier*, *proceeding from the Father and the Son ! One* with the REDEEMER in *Godhead* and everlaſting *Love* to Souls. John xiv. 16. *The Comforter, whom I will ſend unto You from the Father, He ſhall receive of Mine and ſhew it unto you.*

This Heavenly *Gift* reſted on *Moſes and the Elders*, *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, ſanctified and inſpired them. He

He has formed every *Saint* thro' all the Ages of the Church. But the grand *Effusion* was the Glory of the *New Testament*, and the *Promise* is still flowing down to us: Isai. xliv. 3. "I will pour *Water* upon him that is "*thirsty*, and *Floods* upon the *dry* Ground; I will pour "my SPIRIT upon your *Seed*, and my *Blessing* upon "your *Offspring*: And *one* shall say I am the Lord's, "and another shall *subscribe* with his Hand to the Lord, &c. ---- *Souls* can need nor ask more. *Christ* has no more to offer to us. John vii. 37. *In the last and great Day of the Feast Jesus stood and cried, saying,* "*If any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water: This spake He of the* SPIRIT *which they that believe on him shall receive.*

CHRIST and the HOLY GHOST are the *One*, inseperable, undivided, infinite, eternal, and therefore *unspeakable Gift of* GOD. Let us *wait* for it as for the *Rain*, and *open* our Mouth *wide* for it as for the *latter* Rain. God *fill* us with this Blessing of Blessings. Revel. xxii. 17. "*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take of the Water of Life freely.*

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